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PAKISTAN-USSR-AFGHANISTAN: Status of UN Mediation

//Pakistani President Zia is optimistic that the USSR may alter its policy on Afghanistan, but the just-concluded round of UN-sponsored talks apparently achieved only slight progress and left key elements of a settlement untouched.//

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the parties have agreed in principle that the withdrawal of Soviet troops has to be completed within a specific time, that the Afghan refugees are to be consulted through some form of UN machinery, and that Pakistan has to provide specific guarantees of noninterference to meet Soviet concerns. Actual dates for a Soviet withdrawal were not discussed, and Moscow has not precisely defined what it considers interference. The Pakistanis deny there have been any significant discussions on the subject of a transition government.//

[REDACTED]

Comment: //Although the parties evidently have slightly narrowed their differences on the elements to be included in a political settlement, the UN effort could quickly stall when detailed negotiations begin. The refugees, who so far have publicly rejected the UN effort, will not agree to return to Afghanistan unless all elements of a settlement are acceptable to them.//

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//The Soviets probably would not agree to a timetable for withdrawal without assurances regarding the kind of government they will leave behind in Kabul. At this stage, they have shown little interest in anything but cosmetic changes to the Afghan regime. In addition, given the inability of any one party to control movement across the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, Islamabad will be unable to give the Soviets a credible guarantee of noninterference.//

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